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Key Role of Churches in Africa's Future

(Washington, D.C.) - Dr. R.S. Garfield Todd, former Prime Minister of Rhodesia, said here that the Christian Church will play a key role in the future development of race relations in Africa because it teaches the white man that all men are equal before God.

"The Bible teaches us that we are all sons of God and therefore brothers," Dr. Todd told a meeting in Washington at the beginning of a speaking tour in the US. Dr. Todd, who headed the government of Southern Rhodesia from 1953-1957 and is now leader of the opposition party, spent 26 years as a missionary of the Disciples of Christ in that land before entering the government. He is first vice-president of the World Convention of Churches of Christ (Disciples).

"When the white man came to Africa, the black man was so far below him in education, culture and talent that it was easy to be a missionary and to assume a paternal role," he pointed out. "Now, however, the role must be transformed into a fraternal one, a relationship between equals, and this is a very hard adjustment for the white man to make."

"In Southern Rhodesia we have 200,000 white residents and a Negro population that has increased from an estimated 500,000 to over 2,000,000 in just 60 years," Dr. Todd said. "The relationship has been a simple one of master and servant but this must now change, and there is a great deal of resistance to the change."

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"Nearly all our white settlers are Christians," said Dr. Todd, "and the church is the only agency that can help them meet this crisis. Its message of human brotherhood is the only one which is relevant to the situation and that points a way out for both black man and white".

For all the problems that beset his country, Dr. Todd said, the Christian faith offers the best hope of a solution.

"For more than a decade my wife and I ran a mission station in an area where all our associates were natives," the Rhodesian leader declared. "We have seen that the black man does have talents and abilities equal to any of the human race and we know that white and black can work together in harmony".

EPS, Geneva

WCC and Brazilian Church Leaders Confer

(Sao Paulo, Brazil) - Brazilian evangelical leaders and World Council of Churches officials have been conferring here to improve ecumenical work and contacts in the Brazilian churches.

At a recent two-day consultation called by Methodist Bishop Joao Augusto do Amaral, special emphasis was given to the meaning of the WCC basis, relations with Eastern Orthodox and Roman Catholics, Eastern European churches and the WCC and questions raised by the proposed "integration" of the World Council of Churches and the International Missionary Council in late 1961.

WCC representatives included Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, stated clerk of the United Presbyterian Church, USA; Dr. Kathleen Bliss, an official of the Church of England; and Sir Kenneth Grubb, president of the Church Missionary Society. Sir Kenneth spoke in Portuguese. He spent many years as a businessman and lay missionary in Brazil.

A highlight of the meeting, the first such encounter on Brazilian soil between Brazil evangelicals and WCC leaders, was a speech by Archbishop Iakovos of the Greek Archdiocese of North and South Americanwith headquarters in New York. The Archbishop whose visit marked the first official contact between Greek Orthodox hierarchy and top churchmen from the evangelical side, appealed for closer working relationships and told the Brazilian evangelical representatives that his Church and the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Constantinople wanted "closer brotherly relations" between Protestants and Orthodox all over the world.

Between thirty and forty Brazilian participants attended the meeting in addition to WCC executive members and staff. Groups represented included Presbyterians, Independent Presbyterians, the Christian Church of Sao Paulo, the Evangelical Armenian Church, the Reformed Church (Hungarian), Anglicans, Methodists, Lutherans, Dutch Reformed, the Evangelical Confederation of Brazil and the Brazil Bible Society.

EPS, Geneva

Korean Presbyterians End Rift

(Seoul) - A five-month rift in Korea's largest Presbyterian Church has been ended by a decision to withdraw from membership in the World Council of Churches.

Delegates to a re-uniting Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of Korea voted to take the action as a means of placating a minority fraction known as the "anti-ecumenical" group which had demanded withdrawal from the WCC.

The majority, representing more than half of the 258 delegates present (out of a possible total of 286) belonged to the majority group known as "the ecumenical party."

The "anti-ecumenical" fraction had alleged that the World Council was pro-Communist and that it accepted a liberal interpretation of the Bible.

The statement approving withdrawal from the WCC denied these charges, but said the action was required to restore peace to the church.

Observers said that it is possible that despite the action to withdraw from the WCC the extremists of the minority group, only a few of whom were absent from the reunion Assembly, may leave the church and form a new fraction. The church has a membership of 550,000 persons. EPS, Geneva

Sudan Bars Graham Rally

(Bulawayo, S. Rhodesia) - Sudanese Government officials have barred US evangelist Billy Graham from holding a meeting in Khartoum, scheduled later this month.

They gave no official reason for refusing permission to hold the meeting, but observers noted that martial law is still in force in the Sudan and the meeting would have conflicted with observance of the Moslem holy month of Ramadan.

Meanwhile, Dr. Graham, holding to his principle of preaching only to non-segregated groups, addressed 9,000 Rhodesians at the largest multi-racial meeting ever held in the Central African Federation. At the close of the meeting about 400 persons made "decisions for Christ." EPS, Geneva

Russians Learn of US Church Architecture

(Washington, D.C.) - Russians are learning about modern church architecture in the United States.

A photographic essay and article on the subject is featured in the current issue of "Ameryka", the Russian-language picture magazine which the United States is permitted to distribute in the Soviet Union under an exchange agreement.

The article informs Russian readers that "a religion firmly anchored in the lives of the people today cannot simply repeat the forms of the past. It must reinterpret tradition and give architectural expression to its faith in terms of the present, reflecting contemporary culture," it states.

It says of the structures pictured in the story: "These churches speak a simple, modest, honest language. (They) give man a place of worship that reflects his time and culture, providing valid contemporary symbols of faith."

Churches selected by a panel of architects include the First Presbyterian Church of Stamford, Conn., built in a stylized fish-shape reminiscent of the early Christian symbol for a house of worship; the Roman Catholic Church of the Resurrection, St. Louis, Mo., erected on a parabolic design; the Wayfarer's Chapel (Swedenborgian) of Palos Verdes, Cal., open to ocean and sky by means of glass walls; the Catholic chapel of the Holy Cross, standing atop two spurs of rugged red rock in Ariyona's Verde River valley.

Also a Lutheran church in Eugene, Ore., featuring an unusual design of exposed, laminated wood arches to create a cathedral-like interior; St. Stephen's Episcopal church, Columbus, O., with a glass front to welcome passers-by who wish to stop in for prayer or meditation; the Catholic church of St. Philip the Apostle in Clifton, N.J., which has sharp-peaked redwood arches to give a new version of Gothic style. EPS, Geneva

French Roman Catholics Will Boycott Khrushchev Visit

(Paris) - The Roman Catholic Church will boycott Soviet Premier Nikita S. Khrushchev's visit to France starting March 15 as a protest against "atheistic and persecuting Communism."

Maurice Cardinal Feltin, Archbishop of Paris, who normally attends government receptions for high dignitaries will avoid all ceremonies for Mr. Khrushchev. No member of the clergy will be present either when he visits Notre Dame Cathedral in Paris or the cathedrals at Rouen and Reims. They will be shown him as "historic monuments" by government officials.

In adopting its attitude it was understood the Church does not criticize the French Government. A letter by Cardinal Richaud, Archbishop of Bordeaux, says the Church distinguishes between Mr. Khrushchev as Chief of State with whom negotiations in favour of peace are desirable and as "the official representative of atheistic and persecuting Communism." He called for prayers during the visit for the "Church of Silence" in Eastern European countries and for international peace. EPS, Geneva

WCC Has 60,000 Refugee Caseload

(Geneva) - More than 60,000 refugees are on the caseload of the World Council of Churches. About 33,000 of these are awaiting emigration while the remaining 27,000 are listed as non-settled (still in camps, handicapped, needing help to integrate).

The national breakdown of registered refugees is:
China, 12,000 (about 10,000 Europeans, 2,000 Chinese); France, 3,288; Austria, 4,557; Belgium, 2,532; Germany, 13,106; Greece, 9,201; Holland, 6,180; Turkey, 1,722; UK, 537; Near East, 4,519; Italy, 1,494; Iron Curtain, 717; and other countries about 1,000.

Dr. Edgar H.S. Chandler, Director of the WCC's Service to Refugees, which has a 500-member field staff in about 50 countries, said the spot caseload check does not account for the constant flow of new arrivals.

In China and the Near East, the number registered have been restricted to those for whom there is some possibility of resettlement. "There is an unlimited backlog of refugees in these two areas alone who could be registered if there were definite hopes of emigration and integration," he said.

EPS, Geneva

NCC Leaders Demand Retraction of Communist Charges

(Washington, D.C.) - National Council of Churches officials have been invited to dispute before a Congressional committee charges appearing in a recently published Air Force training manual. According to these charges Communists have infiltrated the churches.

Representative Francis E. Walter, chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee, telegraphed the invitation following action by six leaders of four major Protestant denominations demanding that he "retract his untrue statement" supporting the charges.

Rep. Walter asked the NCC leaders if they wanted to testify "in order to question the accuracy of the material which comes from the (committee) files and which appears in the Air Force manual".

A spokesman for the six NCC leaders said that Rep. Walter's offer ignored the main issue at stake in their demand for a retraction. Nevertheless, it was indicated, they will almost certainly accept his invitation to testify.

In asking for a retraction the church leaders noted that a resolution of the National Council's general board at a quarterly meeting February 24 condemned the Air Force for issuing the manual containing "untrue and ridiculous charges ....."

The resolution said that an "important issue" of the controversy "is how long the American people are going to allow various agencies of Government to continue the practice of treating false and absurd charges lifted from confidential files as material to be seriously used as a basis for security decisions and for official indoctrination of Government employees".

The signers of the telegramme, all leaders of NCC member-churches, spoke for themselves and not as NCC officials. They were:
The Rev. Dr. Eugene Carson Blake, Stated Clerk of the United Presbyterian Church in the USA; the Rev. Dr. Fred Hoskins, co-president of the United Church of Christ; the Rt. Rev. Arthur C. Lichtenberger, presiding Bishop of the Protestant Episcopal Church; the Rev. Dr. Arthur Miller, moderator of the United Presbyterian Church; the Rev. Dr. James E. Wagner, co-president of the United Church of Christ; and Bishop Frederick B. Newell, New York Area, the Methodist Church.

The National Council of Churches includes most of the major Protestant and Eastern Orthodox bodies in the US. Its 34 member churches have a total constituency of 35,000,000. EPS, Geneva

Prompt WCC Aid for Moroccan Earthquake Victims

(Geneva) - Immediate relief consisting of cash, supplies and personnel were sent this week to Agadir, Morocco, scene of the latest earthquake disaster, by the World Council of Churches' headquarters, Geneva, Switzerland. A cable to church relief agencies in 14 different countries from Dr. Leslie E. Cooke, director of the WCC Division of Inter-Church Aid and Service to Refugees, called for "maximum money" and a standby to supply food, clothing and medicines. Relief expenditure of $5,000 was sanctioned.

Dr. Kurtis F. Naylor, director of the Brethren Service Commission European Programme, left Geneva immediately for Morocco to link up with the ecumenical Eirene Team of 10 church workers already in the area and to channel Christian relief.

Dr. Cooke said: "The figures show that 40,000 people are homeless, 1,000 dead and more than 5,000 injured. We anticipate immediate responses from member-churches around the world."

Member-churches in Germany responded with a cash gift of DM.50,000 (about $12,000) for supplies and medicines. They have also sent a plane load of DM.50,000-worth of 2,500 blankets direct to the scene of the disaster.

EPS, Geneva

EKID Synod Supports Dibelius

(Berlin) - The Synod of the Evangelical Church in Germany (EKID) has adopted by a large majority a resolution supporting its president Bishop Otto Dibelius of Berlin-Brandenburg and rejecting political attacks against him.

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The vote of confidence was taken by the 120-member body at the closing session last week of its biennial week-long meeting (February 21-27). The vote was 2 against, 11 abstentions and the remainder in favour. The Synod has 74 members from West Germany, 35 from East Germany and 11 from Berlin.

The resolution states: "Despite the differences of opinion within it, the Synod refutes the accusations of political propaganda directed against Bishop Dibelius ..... (It) knows that Bishop Dibelius is united with it in the fellowship of Jesus Christ ....."

The action came within two days after East Berlin judicial authorities announced they would open preliminary proceedings for a trial of Bishop Dibelius on charges of his having advocated disobedience to the government of East Germany.

The charges would presumably be based on the controversial booklet entitled "The Powers That Be" in which Bishop Dibelius claims that a totalitarian regime is not a "supreme authority" in the biblical sense (see EPS Nos.41 and 42, 1959).

(Church circles in West Berlin, according to reports, have interpreted the purpose of the proceedings as an attempt to prevent the Bishop from entering East Berlin, thus cutting him off from the greater part of his diocese and flock. The Bishop's church, the Marien Kirche, is located in East Be in and he preaches there regularly.)

In another action on the authority question the Synod confirmed a resolution adopted in 1956 by the All-German Synod, which stated in part: "The Gospel liberates us to say 'no' in faith to every totalitarian claim made by human powers, to take up the cause of those who have lost their rights, and to suffer rather than obey laws and ordinances which are contrary to God's will." (see EPS No.7, 1956).

"Now, as then," the Synod said, "we regard this theological declaration as a biblical answer to the question of the Christian attitude to the State ..."

In other session during the seven-day meeting the Synod:

Called upon the atom powers to use all means to arrive at a peaceful settlement of issues. This action was taken following sharp disagreement between one faction which wants a statement demanding unqualified condemnation of all atomic weapons and another which feels that in some cases their use is justifiable. A report of a special study committee on the issue said that "so far no reconciliation of contrasting views has become visible".

Issued a statement confirming that its 1957 treaty with the Federal Republic (West Germany) on the Spiritual Care in the Armed Forces is the sole concern of the West German churches and that the East German churches have no responsibility for it. The Synod said the statement was required to bring this fact to public attention again because of the "misunderstandings and sharp attacks in the press". The East German press has sharply attacked the arrangements for the chaplaincy service.

Referred to member-churches a recommendation that the age for church confirmation be lowered from 14 to 12, a device proposed as an answer to problems raised by competing "youth initiation" rites of the East German Government. (An estimated 70 per cent of children of confirmation age took part in these rites last year.) A Synod statement said that while it was realized no change in the age could "solve the conflict" it was felt that because both Church and State ceremonies are held for the same age, lowering the age would remove one aspect of the problem. Member-churches were asked to study the recommendation and report back to the Synod.

Heard a report from a study committee that negotiations have bogged down concerning an agreement with the East German Government to guarantee that courses in Christian education be included in the curricula of East German schools. The committee said the situation has become "still worse" through the adoption of legislation which makes "atheistic materialism" the basis of all studies in East German schools.

EPS, Geneva

In Brief

The Lutheran Literature Association of Japan has had to move to larger quarters in Tokyo to accommodate its expanding programme. Since its foundation in 1951, the Association has published a total of 50 books and 60 pamphlets. It has four book shops in Tokyo, Nagoy, Kobe and Kunamoto which last year had a combined gross income of $100,000. The Association is supported by the Japan Evangelical Lutheran Church and eleven Lutheran foreign mission agencies.

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Five members of the Holy Synod of the Ecumenical Patriarchate of Istanbul are meeting in Athens with representatives of the Greek Orthodox Church and State officials. Topics under discussion include the status of monasteries on Mount Athos, the Third Assembly of the World Council of Churches in 1961, and the Pan-Orthodox Council at Rhodes, this summer. The delegation from Istanbul is headed by Metropolitan Dorotheos of Princes' Islands.

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The Baptist World Alliance Relief Committee has purchased a spacious building in Sydney, Australia, in cooperation with the New South Wales Baptist Homes Trust, to provide housing for Russian refugees from China. Some of the refugees to be housed in the building fled from Russia more than 40 years ago. Others have come within the past two or three years from the Chinese mainland through Hong Kong.

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Permission has been granted to the Orthodox Coptic Patriarchate in Cairo for the establishment of an Orthodox Church in Kuwait, a predominantly Moslem country. It is believed to be the first time any Christian body has been allowed to set up a worship centre in the country.

* *

Metropolitan Yefrem has been elected head of the Orthodox Church in the Georgian Soviet Socialist Republic to succeed Catholicos Melchisedek, III, who died last January at the age of 88, the Moscow Radio has reported. It said the new Catholicos has been serving as church administrator since the death of Catholicos Melchisedek. He is a graduate of the University of Tiflis.

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Representatives of four US Lutheran Churches engaged in mergernegotiations have decided to call the new church the "Lutheran Church in America" and have voted in favour of New York over Chicago as the site for its main offices. They also agreed that certain other offices of the 2,000,000 member-merged Church should be located in Philadelphia, Chicago and Minneapolis. The four churches involved are the United Lutheran Church in America, Augustana Lutheran Church, Finnish Evangelical Lutheran Church and American Evangelical Church. Target date for merger has been set as June, 1962.

EPS, Geneva